

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

1. An access brace for a scaffold, said scaffold including a pair of bearers, a platform supported by said pair of bearers, and a guardrail system for surrounding said platform, said access brace comprising:

an elongate member having a first end and a second end;

first engaging means coupled to said first end;

second engaging means coupled to said second end, said first and second engaging means being configured to engage with said pair of bearers; and

a post extending from an intermediate portion of said elongate member, said post being configured to couple with an upright support of said guardrail system.

2. An access brace as claimed in claim 1 wherein:  
said first engaging means is a first end hook; and  
said second engaging means is a second end hook.

3. An access brace as claimed in claim 1 wherein a distance between said first end of said elongate member and said post defines an opening in said guardrail system for access to said platform.

4. An access brace as claimed in claim 1 wherein said post is a first post, and said access brace further comprises a second post extending from said intermediate portion of said elongate member, said second post being configured to couple with said upright support of said guardrail system.

5. An access brace as claimed in claim 4 wherein:  
said first post is located at a first distance from said first end of said elongate member; and  
said second post is located at a second distance from said first end of said elongate member, said second distance being greater than said first distance.

6. An access brace as claimed in claim 1 wherein said upright support of said guardrail system is a tubular member exhibiting an inner diameter, and said post exhibits an outer diameter that is smaller than said inner diameter such that said post fits within said tubular member.

7. An access brace as claimed in claim 1 wherein said elongate member is a first elongate member, and said access brace further comprises:

a second elongate member arranged substantially parallel to said first elongate member; and

a support extending between said first and second elongate members for retaining said first and second elongate members in spaced relation.

8. An access brace as claimed in claim 7 wherein said scaffold further includes vertical posts, and said access brace further comprises a bracket coupled to said second elongate member, said bracket being configured for attachment to one of said vertical posts.

9. An access brace as claimed in claim 8 wherein said bracket comprises:

a U-shaped member characterized by first and second legs interconnected by an arcuate portion, said arcuate portion being configured to abut said one of said vertical posts; and

a pin directed through apertures in each of said first and second legs.

10. An access brace as claimed in claim 8 wherein:

said second elongate member has a third end and a fourth end;

said bracket is a first bracket coupled to said third end; and

said access brace further comprises a second bracket coupled to said fourth end and configured for attachment to a second one of said vertical posts.

11. An access brace as claimed in claim 7 wherein said support is arranged substantially perpendicular to said first and second elongate members and is aligned with said post.

12. A scaffold comprising:

a frame arrangement including a first bearer extending between a first pair of vertical posts, and a second bearer extending between a second pair of vertical posts;

a platform supported by said first and second bearers;

an access brace including an elongate member having a first end and a second end, a first end hook coupled to said first end and engaged with said first bearer, a second end hook coupled to said second end and engaged with said second bearer, and a post extending from an intermediate portion of said elongate member, said post being located a predetermined distance from said first end; and

a guardrail system surrounding said platform, said guardrail system including an upright support coupled with said post, and said predetermined distance defining an opening in said guardrail system for access to said platform.

13. A scaffold as claimed in claim 12 wherein said post is a first post, said predetermined distance is a first distance, and said access brace further includes a second post extending from said intermediate portion of said elongate member, said second post being located at a second distance from said first end of said elongate member, said second distance being greater than said first distance, and said upright support is selectively coupled to one of said first and second posts.

14. A scaffold as claimed in claim 12 wherein said upright support of said guardrail system is a tubular member exhibiting an inner diameter, and said post exhibits an outer diameter that is smaller than said inner diameter such that said post fits within said tubular member.

15. A scaffold as claimed in claim 12 wherein said elongate member is a first elongate member, and said access brace further comprises:

a second elongate member arranged substantially parallel to said first elongate member; and

a support extending between said first and second elongate members for retaining said first and second elongate members in spaced relation.

16. A scaffold as claimed in claim 16 wherein said access brace further comprises a bracket coupled to said second elongate member and attached to one of said vertical posts.

17. An access brace for a scaffold, said scaffold including a pair of bearers, a platform supported by said pair of bearers, and a guardrail system for surrounding said platform, said access brace comprising:

a first elongate member having a first end and a second end;

a second elongate member arranged substantially parallel to said first elongate member;

a support extending between said first and second elongate members for retaining said first and second elongate members in spaced relation;

a first end hook coupled to said first end of said first elongate member;

a second end hook coupled to said second end of said first elongate member, said first and second end hooks being configured to engage with said pair of bearers; and

a post extending from an intermediate portion of said first elongate member, said post being configured to couple with an upright support of said guardrail system.

18. An access brace as claimed in claim 17 wherein a distance between said first end of said first elongate member and said post defines an opening in said guardrail system for access to said platform.

19. An access brace as claimed in claim 17 wherein said scaffold further includes vertical posts, and said access brace further comprises:

a first bracket coupled to a third end of said second elongate member, said first bracket being configured for attachment to a first one of said vertical posts; and

a second bracket coupled to a fourth end of said second elongate member, said second bracket being configured for attachment to a second one of said vertical posts.

20. An access brace as claimed in claim 19 wherein each of said first and second brackets comprises:

a U-shaped member characterized by first and second legs interconnected by an arcuate portion, said arcuate portion being configured to abut said one of said first and second vertical posts; and

a pin directed through apertures in each of said first and second legs.